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SUBJECT: PER-SAFETY AND HEALTH

Purpose. To provide information on Radon in Minnesota homes.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2007.

Did you know the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States could be lingering in your home? Radon is tasteless, odorless and colorless radioactive gas. Radon occurs naturally from the breakdown of uranium inside the earth. An estimated 15,000 to 22,000 lung cancer deaths are caused by radon each year.

Much of the soil in the Upper Midwest contains widespread uranium and radium. Therefore, Minnesota's geology provides an ongoing supply of radon. It is estimated that one third of homes have enough radon to pose a risk to the occupants over years of exposure. A large percentage of Minnesota homes have high levels of radon indoors because of how they are built and how they operate in our climate. One important factor is that many Minnesota homes have basements that are used as living spaces.

How does radon get into your house? Radon can enter anywhere there is an opening between the house and soil. The most common points are pores or cracks in concrete blocks, exposed soil in a crawl space, open tops of block walls, and floor-wall joints. Any unsealed part of your home can lead to a risk of radon seeping through.

For more information on the risk of radon or to buy a radon test kit visit www.health.state.mn.us.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

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